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THE RESURRECTION FLOWER.

He folded his hands across his breast,
As token that toils should cease,
And his pallid face had a look of rest
That startled them with its peace.

So weary had been the stress and strife,
So chafing the trials past!
And now like a loosened bark his life
Was drifting away at last.

They had not the heart to signal him
With even a touch or tone,
As out to the sea, unknown and dim,
They watched as he went alone.

They knew that the pilot who held the helm
Would guide to the furtherest verge,
Not suffer a fear to overwhelm,
Not suffer a wave to submerge.

And so, as they sat with hushing breath,
Too burdened, too awed to speak,
There burst on the silent room of death
A child, with a flushing cheek.

"Ah, see!" she said, "it is sweet and bright,
And brimmed to the edge with dew.
It hurried to open its leaves last night
To be ready in time for you."

She knew not, the darling, what she did,
As her childish thought she told,
Nor what was the mystic meaning hid
In that delicate cup of gold;

For over the greening April land
Had broken the Easter hour,
And the flower she laid in the dying hand
Was a Resurrection Flower.

—*Margaret J. Preston.*

AN IMPERIAL PARDON.

During a journey through some parts of Russia a few years ago, we engaged, in preference to the imperial post-chaise, a private conveyance for a considerable distance, the driver being a Jew—generally preferred in the East on account of their sobriety and general trustworthiness. On the road my companion became communicative, and entered into philosophic-religious discussion—a topic of frequent occurrence among these bilingual populations. After a somewhat desultory harangue, he suddenly became silent and sad, having just uttered the words: 'If a Chassid goes astray, what does he become? A meschumed, i. e. an apostate.'—'To what class of people do you allude?' I inquired. 'Well, it just entered my head, because we have to pass the house of one of them—I mean the "forced ones."'—'Forced!' I thought of a religious sect. 'Are they Christians or Jews?'—'Neither the one nor the other,' was the reply, 'but simply forced.' Oh, sir, it is a great misery and a great crime! Our children at least will not know anything of it, because new victims do not arise, and on the marriage of these parties rests a curse—they remain sterile! But what am I saying? It is rather a blessing—a mercy! Should thus a terrible misery be perpetuated? These forced people are childless. Well, God knows best. I am a fool, a sinner to speak about it.' No entreaty of mine would induce my Jewish companion to afford further information concerning this peculiar people. But before the end of our journey I heard unexpectedly more about this unfortunate class of Russian subjects. We travelled westward through the valley of the Dniester, a district but thinly peopled, and rested at an inn on the borders of an extensive forest.

Amidst the raillery going on in the principal room of this hostelry between guests of different nationalities, we had not heard the noise of wheels which slowly moved towards the house. It was a very poor conveyance, containing a small cask and a basket. The young hostess arose hastily, and approaching the owner, said in a whisper, 'What is it you want?' A slight paleness overspread her countenance, and stranger still was the demeanor of my coachman. 'Sir, sir!' he exclaimed loudly, turning towards me, stretching out his hands as if seeking support, or warding off some impending danger. 'What is the matter?' I rejoined, greatly surprised; but he merely shook his head, and stared at the new comer.

He was an elderly peasant, attired in the usual garb of the country-people; only at a more close inspection I noticed that he wore a fine white shirt. Of his face I could see but little, it being hidden behind the broad brim of his straw hat.

'Hostess,' he said addressing the young woman, 'will you purchase something of me? I have some old brandy, wooden spoons and plates, pepper-boxes, needle-cases, &c., all made of good hard wood, and very cheap.' In an almost supplicating tone he uttered these words very slowly, with downcast eyes. From his pronunciation he appeared to be a Pole.

The hostess looked shyly up to him. 'You know my brother-in-law has forbidden me to have dealings with you,' she said hesitatingly, 'on account of your wife; but to-day he is not at home.' After a momentary silence, turning towards the driver, she continued, 'Reb Russian, will you betray me? You come frequently this way.' In reply he merely shrugged his shoulders and moved away. Turning again with some impatience to the peasant, she said, 'Bring me a dish and two spoons.' When he had gone to fetch these articles, the woman once more accosted my coachman.

'You must not blame me; they are very poor people!'

'Certainly they are very poor'—he replied in a milder tone. 'During life, hunger and misery, and after death—hell! and all undeserved!' But the man stood already, at this utterance, with his basket in the room. The bargain was soon concluded, and a few copeks paid. Curiosity prompted me to step forward and examine the merchandise.

'I have also cigar-cases,' said the peasant, humbly raising his hat But his face was far more interesting than his wares. You rarely see such features! However great the misery on earth, this pale, pain-stricken countenance was unique in its kind, revealing yet traces of sullen defiance, and the glance of his eyes moved instantly the heart of the beholder—a weary, almost fixed gaze, and yet full of passionate mourning.

'You are a Pole!' I observed after a pause.

'Yes,' he replied.

'And do you live in this neighborhood?'

'At the inn eight werst from here. I am the keeper.'

'And besides wood-carver?'

'We must do the best we can,' was his reply. 'We have but rarely any guests at our house.'

'Does your hostelry lie outside the main road?'

'No, close to the high road, sir. It was at one time the best inn between the Bug and the Dniester. But now carriers do not like to stay at our house.'

'And why not?'

'Because they consider it a sin—especially the Jews.' Suddenly, with seeming uneasiness and haste, he asked, 'Will you purchase anything? This box, perhaps. Upon the lid is engraved a fine country-house.'

Attracted by the delicate execution, I inquired, 'And is this your own workmanship?'

'Yes,' was his reply.

'You are an artist! And pray where did you learn wood-engraving?'

'At Kamieniec-Poddski.'

'At the fortress?'

'Yes, during the insurrection of 1863.'

'Were you among the insurgents?'

'No, but the authorities feared I might join them—hence I and the other forced ones were incarcerated in the fortress when the insurrection broke out, and again set free when it was suppressed.'

'Without any cause?'

'Without the slightest. I was already at that time a crushed man. When yet a youth the marrow of my bones had been poisoned in the mines of Siberia. During the whole time of my settlement, I have been since 1858 keeper of that inn; I gave the authorities no cause for suspicion, but I was a 'forced man,' and that sufficed for pouncing upon me.'

'Forced! what does it mean?'

'Well, a person forced to accept, when to others free choice is left—domicile, trade or calling, wife and religion.'

'Terrible!' I exclaimed. 'And you submitted?' A little smile played around his thin lips.

'Are you so much moved at my fate? We generally bear very easily the most severe pains endured by others.'

'That is a saying of Larochefoucauld,' I said, somewhat surprised. 'Have you read him?'

'I was at one time very fond of French literature. But pardon my acrimony. I am but little accustomed to sympathy, and indeed of what avail would it be to me now!' He stared painfully at the ground, and I also became silent, convinced that any superficial expression of sympathy would, under the circumstances, be downright mockery.

A painful pause ensued, which I broke with the question, if he had worked the engraving upon the lid of the box after a pattern.

'No, from memory,' was his rejoinder.

'It is a peculiar kind of architecture!'

'It is like all gentlemen's houses in Littauen; only the old tree is very striking. It was a very old house.'

'Has been? Does it exist no longer?'

'It was burnt down seven years ago by the Russians, after they had first ransacked it. They evidently were not aware that they destroyed their own property. It had been confiscated years before, and had been Crown property since 1848.'

'And have you yet the outlines of the building so firmly engraved on your memory?'

'Of course! it was my birth-place, which I had rarely left until I was eighteen years old. Such things are not easily forgotten. And although more than twenty years have passed since this sad affair, hardly a day passed on which I did not think of my paternal home. I was aware of the death of my mother, and that my cousin was worse than dead—perhaps I ought to have rejoiced when the old mansion was burnt to the ground; but yet I could not suppress a tear when the news reached me. There is hardly anything on earth which can now move me.' I record literally what the unfortunate man related. My Jewish coachman, not easily impressed, had during the conversation crept gradually nearer, and shook his head seriously and sorrowfully.

'Excuse me, Pani Walerian,' he interrupted: upon my honour, yours is a sad story!' He launched out into practical politics, and concluded thus:

'A Pole is not as clever as I am. If he (the Pole) was the equal of the Russian, well and good, fight it out; but the Russian is a hundred times stronger; therefore, Pani Walerian, why irritate him, why confront him?'

I could not help laughing at these remarks: but the poor 'forced one' remained unmoved; and only after some silence, he observed, turning towards me:

'I have never even confronted the Russians. I merely received the punishment of the criminal, without being one, or venturing my all in my people's cause. I was very young, when I was transported to Siberia—little more than nineteen years old. My father had died early. I managed our small property, and a cousin of mine, a pretty girl, sixteen years old, lived at our house. Indeed, I had no thoughts of politics. It is true I wore the national costume, perused our poets, especially Mickiewicz and Slowaski, and had on the wall of my bedroom a portrait of Kosciuszko. For such kind of high treason even the Russian Government would not have crushed me in ordinary times—but it was the year 1848. 'Nicolai Pawlowitch' had not sworn in vain that if the whole of Europe was in flames, no spark should arise in his empire—and by streams of blood and tears, he achieved his object. Wherever a young Polish noble lived who was suspected of revolutionary tendencies, repeated domiciliary searches were made: and if only a single prohibited book was found, the dread fiat went forth, 'To Siberia with him!'

'In my own case it came like a thunderbolt. I was already in Siberia, and could not yet realize my misery. During the whole long journey I was more or less delirious. I hoped for a speedy liberation, for I was altogether innocent, and at that time,' he continued with a bitter smile, 'I yet believed in God. When all hope became exstinct, I began madly to rave, but finally settled down utterly crushed and callous. It was a fearful state—for weeks together, all my past life seemed a complete blank, at most I still remembered my name. This, sir, is litterally true: Siberia is a very peculiar place.'

The poor fellow had sunk down upon a bench, his hands rested powerless in his lap. I never have seen a face so utterly worn and pain-stricken. After a while he continued:

'Ten years had thus passed away; at least, I was told so—I had long ceased to count the days of my misery. For what purpose should I have done so?

'I had sunk so low that I felt no pity even for my terrible condition. One day I was brought before the Inspector, together with some of my companions. This official informed us that we had been pardoned on condition of becoming colonists in New Russia. The mercy of the Czar would assign to each of us a place of residence, a trade, and a lawful wife, who would be also a pardoned convict. We must of course, in addition, be converted to the orthodox Greek Church. This latter stipulation did but little concern us. We readily accepted the conditions, for the people are glad of leaving Siberia, no matter whither, even to meet death itself. And had we not been pardoned? Alexander Nikolajewitch is a gracious lord. In Siberia the mines are over-crowded, and in South Russia the steppes are empty! Oh, he is a philanthropist! decus et deliciæ generis humani! But perhaps I wrong him. We entered upon our long journey, and proceeded slowly south-west. In about eight months we reached Mohilew. Here we were only kept in easy confinement, and above all, brought under the influence of the pope. This was a rapid proceeding. One morning we were driven together into a large room, about one hundred men, and an equal number of women. Presently the priest entered; a powerful and dirty fellow, who appeared to have invigorated himself for his holy work with a considerable dose of gin, for we could smell it at least ten paces off, and he had some difficulty in keeping upon his legs.

'You ragmuffins!' he stammered; 'you vermin of humanity! you are to become Orthodox Christians; but surely I shall not take much trouble with you. For what do you think I get per head? Ten copeks, you vermin! ten copeks per head. Who will be a missionary at such pay? I certainly do it to-day for the last time! Indeed, our good father Alexander Nikolajewitch caused one rouble to be set in the tariff; but that rascal, the director, pockets ninety copeks, and leaves only ten for me. To-day, however, I have undertaken your conversion, because I am told there are many of you. Now listen! you are now Catholics, Protestants, Jews! That is sad mistake; for every Jew is a blood-sucker, every Protestant a dog, and every Catholic a pig. Such is their lot in life—but after death? carrion, my good people, carrion! And will Christ have mercy on them at the last day? Verily no! He will not dream of such a thing! And until then? Hell fire! Therefore, good people, why should you suffer such torments? Be converted! Those who agree to become Orthodox Christians, keep silent; those who demur, receive the knout and go back to Siberia. Wherefore, my dear brothers and sisters, I ask, will you become Orthodox Christians?'

'We remained silent.

'''Well', continued the priest, 'now pay attention! Those who are already Christians need only to lift up the right hand, and repeat after me the creed. That will soon be done. But with the damned Jews one has always a special trouble—the Jews I must first baptise. Jews, step forward!—the other vermin can remain where they now are.' In this solemn manner the ceremony was brought to a conclusion.

"On the day following," M. Walerian continued, "the second act was performed: the selection of a trade. This act was as spontaneous as our religious conversion; only, some individual regard became here indispensable. Three young Government officials were deputed to record our wishes, and to comply with them as far as the exigencies of the case admitted. The official before whom I appeared was very juvenile. Though externally very polished, he was in reality a frightfully coarse and cruel youth, without a spark of human feeling, so far as we were concerned. We afforded him no small amount of merriment. This youth inquired carefully concerning our wishes, and invariably ordered the very opposite. Among us was a noble lady from Poland, of very ancient lineage, very feeble and miserable, whose utter helplessness might well inspire the most callous heart with respect and compassion. The lady was too old to be married to one of the 'forced ones,' and was therefore asked to state what kind of occupation she desired. She entreated to be employed in some school for daughters of military officers, there being a demand for such service; but the young gentleman ordered her to go as laundress to the barracks at Mohilew! An aged Jew had been sent to Siberia for having smuggled prohibited books across the frontiers. He had been the owner of a printing establishment, and was well acquainted with the business. 'Could he not be employed in one of the Imperial printing offices; and if possible,' urged the aged man, 'be permitted to reside in a place where a few or no Jews lived?' He had under compulsion changed his religion; to which he was yet frequently attached, and trembled at the thought that his former co-religionists would none the less avoid him as an apostate. The young official noted down his request, and made him a police agent at Miaskowka, a small town in the government district of Podolien, almost exclusively inhabited by Jews. Another, a former schoolmaster, in the last stages of consumption, begged on his knees to be permitted to die quietly in some country village. 'That is certainly a modest request!' observed this worthless youth; and sent him as a waiter to a hospital. Need I tell how I fared? Being misled, like the rest, by the hypocritical air and seeming concern of this rascal, I made known to him my desire to obtain the post of under-steward at some remote Crown estate, where I might have as little intercourse as possible with my fellow-men. And thus, sir, I became the keeper of the small inn on a much frequented highway!"

The unfortunate man arose suddenly, and paced the room in a state of great excitement.

"But now comes the best of all," he exclaimed, with a desperate effort—"the last act, the choice of a wife." Again an internal struggle overpowered the unhappy narrator—a sudden and heavy tear rolled down his care-worn cheek, evidently caused by the remembrance of this abominable transaction. "It was a terrible ordeal," he said. "Sir, sir," he continued after a momentary pause, "since the sun has risen in our horizon, he has shone on many a cruel game which the mighty of the earth have played with the helpless, but a more abominable farce has ever been enacted than the one I am now relating—the manner in which we unfortunate people were coupled together. In my youth I read how Carrier at Nantes murdered the Royalists; how he caused the first best man to be tied with a rope to a woman, and carried down the Loire in a boat. In the middle of the river a trap-door was suddenly opened, and the unfortunate couple disappeared in the waves. But that monster was an angel compared with the officials of the Czar; and these republican marriages were a benevolent act in comparison with those we were forced to conclude. At Nantes, the victims were tied together for a mutual death; we for our mutual lives! . . . On a subsequent morning we were once more ushured into the room where our conversion had taken place. There were present about thirty men and an equal number of women. Together with the latter entered the official who had so considerately ordered our lot as regards a livelihood.

"'Ladies and gentlemen,' he commenced with a nasal twang, 'his Majesty has graciously pardoned you, and desires to see you all happy. Now, the lonely man is seldom a happy man; and hence you are to marry. Every gentleman is free to select a partner, provided of course the lady accepts the choice. And in order that none of your gentlemen may be placed in the invidious position of having to select a partner unworthy of him, supreme benevolence has ordered that an adequate number of ladies, partly from penal settlements and partly from houses of correction, should be now offered you. As his Majesty's solicitude for your welfare has already assigned you an occupation, you may now follow unhesitatingly the promptings of your own hearts in the choice of a wife. Ladies and gentlemen, yours is the happy privilege to realize the dream of a purely socialistic marriage. Make, then, your selection without delay; and as "all genuine love is instantaneous, sudden as a lightning flash, and soft as the breezes of spring"—to use the words of our poet Lermontoff—I consider one hour sufficient. Bear also in mind that marriages are ratified in heaven, and trust implicitly to your own heart. I offer you before hand, ladies and gentlemen, my congratulations.'

"After this address, the young rascal placed his watch in front of him on the table, sat down and grinned maliciously at our helpless condition. The full measure of scorn implied in this speech but few of us entirely realized, for we were in truth a curious assembly. The most extravagant imagination could hardly picture more glaring contrasts! Side by side with the bestial Bessarabian herdsman, who in a fit of intoxication had slain the whole of his family, stood the highly cultivated professor from Wilna, whom the love of his country and of freedom had consigned to the mines of Siberia; the most desperate thief and shop-lifter from Moscow, and the Polish nobleman who at the height of his misfortunes still regarded his honour as the most precious treasure, the ex-professor from Charkow, and the Cossac-robber from the Don; the forger from Odessa, &c. On my own right hand stood a thief and deserter from Lipkany, and on the left a Baschkire, who had been pardoned at the foot of the gallows, though he had once assisted in roasting alive a Jewish family in a village inn. A madley assorted medley of human beings! And the women! The dissolute female gladly released from the house of correction, because she still more depraved her already degraded companions, associated with the unfortunate Polish lady, whose pure mind had never been poisned by a vulgar word, and whose quiet happiness had not been disturbed by any prospect of misfortune, until a single letter, of act of charity to an exiled countryman, brought her into misery. Pressing against the young girl whose sole offence consisted in being the unfortunate offspring of a mother sent to Siberia, might be seen the infamous hag who had habitually decoyed young girls to ruin, in whose soul every spark of womanhood had long been extinguished. And these people were called upon to marry; and one hour was granted them in which to become acquainted and assorted! Sir, you will now perhaps comprehend my emotion in relating this shocking business!

"I consider it the most shocking and at the same time the most curious outrage which has ever been committed." The "forced" man paused, a deadly pallor suffused his countenance, and his agitation was great. The young hostess appeared perfectly stunned, whilst Reb Russian, the coachman, bent his head in evident compassion.

After a while M. Walerian continued in a calmer mood. "It must certainly have been an entertaining spectacle to notice the behavior of this ill-assorted people at that trying hour. Even the barefaced monster on his raised dais betrayed a feverish excitement: he would suddenly jump from his chair, and again recline, playing the while nervously with his fingers. I am hardly able to describe the details, being not altogether unbiased at this dreadful hour.

"I only know we stood at first in two distinct groups, and for the first few moments after the official announcement, not a glance was exchanged between the two sexes, much less a word spoken. A deep silence reigned in the room, a death-like stillness, varied only by an occasional deep sigh, or a nervous movement. The minutes passed, certainly not many, but they seemed to me an eternity!

"Suddenly a loud hoarse voice exclaimed, 'Up, my lads! here are some very pretty mates!' We all recognized the notorious theif from Moscow, a haggard withered fellow, with the ugliest face I ever beheld. He crossed over to the women and examined in his way which would be the most desirable partner. Here he received an indignant push, and there an impudent alluring glance. Others, again—the better part—recoiled from the approaching of the brute. He was followed by the Baschkire, who like a clumsy beast of prey drew nigh, muttering incoherently. 'I will have a fat woman, the fattest among them.' From his approach even the ugliest and most impudent instinctively recoiled—this wooer was really too hideous, at best only suited to a monkey. The third in order who came forward was the Don-Cossac, a pretty slender youth. An impudent lass jauntily met him and fell on his neck; but he pushed her aside, and walked towards the girl who had murdered her child. The discarded female muttered some insulting words, and hung the next moment on my own neck. I shook her off, and she repeated the attempt with my neighbor, and again unsuccessfully.

'Her example became contagious; presently the more shameless of the women made an outslaught on the men. Ten minutes later the scene had changed. In the centre of the room stood a number of men and women engaged in eager negotiation—shouting and scoulding. The parties who had already agreed retired to the window-niches, and here and there a man pulled an unfortunate woman, making desperate efforts to escape from him. The females who yet retained a spark of womanhood crept into a corner of the room; and in another recess were three of us—the ex-professor, Count S., and myself. We had instinctinctively come together, watching with painful emotion this frantic spectacle, not inclined participate in it. To me at least the thought of selecting a wife here never occurred.

'''Another half an hour at your disposal, ladies and gentlemen,' exclaimed our official tormentor; 'twenty minutes—yet fifteen minutes!'

I stood as if rooted to the ground, my knees trembled, my agitation increased, but I remained motionless. Indeed, as often as I heard the unpleasant voice of the official, the blood rushed to my head, but I advanced not one step. My excitement increased—profound disgust, bitter despair—the wildest indignation which perhaps ever pierced a poor human heart. 'No,' I said; 'I must assert the dignity of my manhood!' I was determined not to make the selection of a wife under the eyes of this man. Another impulse I could hardly suppress—viz.: to throw myself upon this imperial delegate and strangle him. And if I finally abstained from an act of violence, it was because I yet loved life, and wished not to end it on the gallows. Sir,' continued M. Walerian, 'the source of great misery on earth is this overpowering instinct of self-preservation; without it I should be freed this day from all my misery. Thus I stood, so to speak, at bay in my corner, using all my efforts to subdue the evil spirit within me. My looks most probably betrayed me—for when my eyes met those of the official, I noticed an involuntary shudder.' A moment afterwards he regarded me with a sly and malignant glance. I turned aside and closed my eyes on this harrassing scene.

'''Yet five minutes ladies, and gentlemen! Those as yet undecided must speed themselves, and unburden their heart, or I shall be compelled by virtue of my office to tie them together. And although I shall do so conscientiously, and to the best of my knowledge, there is this risk—that you engage in a marriage of mere convenience, instead of one of free choice and inclination.'

'Though my agitation reached its climax, I made no move. I considered myself an accomplice in this disgraceful outrage, if I within the allotted five minutes declared my heart and made a choice. But another thought flashed across my mind: 'I may still be able to prevent the worst. Who knows with whom that rascal may couple me if I remain altogether passive? Choose for yourself!'—I I made a step forward—a mist seemed before my eyes—my heart beat wildly—I staggered, I sought figures in order to distinguish and recognize myself.

'Sir,' exclaimed the narrator with a sudden yell, 'what scenes did I see there? I am no coward, but I—I dare not venture to speak of it. Thus I moved forward; hardly two minutes passed, but days would not suffice to relate what passed during these terrible moments through my heart and brain. I noticed in a corner a fainting woman, a young and delicate creture. I learnt afterwards that she was an orphan child, born of a dissolute woman in a penal settlement. A coarse fellow with cunning eyes bent over her, endeavoring to raise her from the ground. I suddenly pounced upon the fellow, struck him a heavy blow, and carried the unconscious woman away as if a mere child. I determined to defend her to the last. But no rescue was attempted, though the forger shook his fists at me, but had seemingly not the courage to approach nearer. Gazing about him, another female embraced him, a repulsive woman. He looked at her somewhat abashed, but soon submitted to her caresses.

'''Ladies and gentlemen! the allotted hour has passed,' said the official. 'I must beg the parties to come forward and make known to me their choice. This may be repugnant to some of you, but my duties prescribe it. I especially request the gentlemen in yonder corner to advance'—pointing to myself and the forger. I clenched my fists involuntarily, but stepped forward with the fainting woman. 'Cossacks, keep your 'Kantschu' in readiness,' said the official to the guard which surrounded him. Turning first to me, he said: 'And are you, sir, resolved to carry the woman you now hold in your arms, not only in this room, but through life?' I nodded assent. 'And what have you to say, damsel? The poor creature was as yet unconscious. 'She is in a swoon,' I replied. 'In that case I am sorry,' continued the official, 'to have to refuse in his Majesty's name my consent to your union. In the interests of humanity, I require an audible yes from all parties. I have watched attentively the whole proceedings,' contiued the official—'not from mere curiosity, but partly as a duty, and partly out of pure sympathy—and I can assure you, sir, without disparagement to your claims, that the choice of the young lady you now hold in your arms fell not upon you, but upon the gentleman yonder,' pointing to the forger. 'It was probably the excess of happiness at this selection which caused her fainting. For you there is waiting an adequate recompense—that ripe, desirable beauty who now only reluctantly holds the arm of your rival. Therefore, changez, Messieurs!' 'Scoundrel!' I exclaimed, and advanced to seize him. But ere I could lay hold of him, a fearful blow on my head stretched me stunned and bleeding to the ground. When I had somewhat recovered, our marriage procession was in progress of formation. The woman whom the official had assigned to me knelt at my side, bathing my head, endeavoring to revive me. 'I like you,' she observed, 'and will treat you well.' She raised me to my feet, placed her arm in mine, and pushed me in the ranks of the procession, which moved slowly towards the church. On our road a heavy hand seized me suddenly by the collar. 'Brother,' grunted a coarse voice in my ear, 'your stout woman takes my fancy. Will you change with me? Mine is certainly less corpulent, but younger in years.'

'It was the man behind me—the Baschkire. The female whom he dragged along was a lean, ugly, dark-complexioned woman swooning or near a swoon. An expression of unutterable despair overspread her features, rendering them, if possible yet more ugly. 'A woman who can suffer so intensely as this one unquestionably does, cannot be without a heart—is not altogether depraved, no matter what cause brought her here.' These reflections determined me. 'She is preferable to the woman at my side. Done!' I whispered to the Baschkire. Just crossing the threshold of the church, a momentary pause ensued, during which we effected the exchange; not without a murmur, however, on the part of my intended wife. But the Baschkire kept her quiet; and a closer inspection of her new partner seemed to satisfy her. The poor woman I led forward seemed hardly aware of the exchange, she was so entirely absorbed in her grief. We were married. The official only afterwards became aware of what had happened, but could not now undo it. But I had to suffer for it—terrible was the puhishment.'

Not another word was uttered by the unfortunate man. Quite overcome by the recital of his cruel fate, he suddenly arose and left the house.

On account of the approach of the Jewish Sabbath, my coachman urged on our journey. Half an hour later, we passed the lonely and dessolate hostelry of poor M. Walerian, the exile of Siberia, who owed so much to imperial clemency.—F. A. S., *in Belgravia.*

There is no true repentance without reformation of life.

Mr. Beecher's Farm.

DESCRIBED BY MARK TWAIN.

Mark Twain has written of Mr. Beecher's farm on the Hudson river as follows:—Mr. Beecher's farm consists of thirty-six acres, and is carried on on scientific priciples. He never puts in a plant or a crop without consulting his book. He ploughs, and reaps, and digs, and sows, according to the best authorities, and the authorities cost him more than the other farming implements do. As soon as the library is complete the farm will be a profitable investment. But book farming has its drawbacks. Upon one occasion, when it seemed morally certain that the hay ought to be cut, the hay book could not be found, and before it was found it was too late, and the hay was all spoiled. Mr. Beecher raises some of the best crops of wheat in the country, but the unfavoorable difference between the cost of producing it and its market value after its produced, has interfered considerably with its success as a commercial enterprise. His special weaknesss is hogs, however. He considers hogs the best game a farm produces. He buys the orginal pig for $1 50, and feeds him $40 worth of corn, and then sells him for about $9. This is the only crop he ever makes any money on. He loses on the corn, but he makes $7.50 on the hog. He does not mind this, because he never expects to make anything on corn. And, any way it turns out he has the excitement of raising the hog, whether he gets the worth of him or not. His strawberries would be a comfortable success if the robins would eat turnips but they won't and hence the difficulty.

One of Mr. Beecher's most harassing difficulties in his farming operations comes of the close resemblance of the different seeds and plants to each other. Two years ago his farsightedness warned him that there was going to be a scarcity of watermelons, and therefore he put in a crop of twenty-seven acres of that fruit. But when they came up they turned out to be pumpkins, and a dead loss was the consequence. Sometimes a portion of his crops goes into the ground the most promising sweet potatoes, and come up the meanest carrots—though I never heard him express it just in that way. When he bought his farm he found one egg in every hen's nest on the place. He said that was just the reason so many farmers failed; they scattered their forces too much. Concentration was the idea. So he gathered those eggs together, and put them all under one experienced old hen. That hen roosted over that contract night and day for eleven weeks, under the personal supervision of Mr. Beecher himself but she could not 'phase' these eggs Why? Because they were those infamous porcelain things which are used by ingenious and fradulent farmers as 'nest eggs.' But perhaps Mr. Beecher's most disastfous experience was the time he tried to raise an immense crop of dried apples. He planted $1,500 worth, but never one of them sprouted. He has never been able to understand to this day what was the matter with those apples.

Mr. Beecher's farm is not a triumph. It would be easier on him if he worked it on shares with some one, but he cannot find anybody who is willing to stand half the expense, and not many that are able. Still persistence in any case is bound to succeed. He was a very inferior farmer when he first began, but a prolonged and unflichingassult upon his agricultural difficulties has had its effect at last, and he is now fast rising from affluence to poverty

How Edison Made a Bug.

A correspondent tells the following story of Edison: One of my letters spoke of the possibility of utilizing the present gas pipes by running the electric wires through them. 'How is this wonderful Edison going to get his wires through the pipes, I should like to know?' asked an unbeliever. Edison thought it over.

'Why, see here, Johnson!' he exclaimed the next morning, 'I'll make a bug that will drag a wire through all the pipes in New York.'

'Make a bug!' said Johnson, 'what in the world are you talking about?'

'Well, I'll make a bug,' said Edison; 'an iron bug that will go where you send it and drag a wire after it.'

His assistants drew around while he described his coming or rather, his going—bug. Next day he hatched a rude specimen of that insect as large as a coat button. And it stood out on the table and crawled.

It was constructed thus: A minute electro-magnet carried behind it a fin-insulated wire, the armature of the magnet operating a friction pawl. Now, observe—every time the circuit is closed through the magnet the armature is attracted, the pawl clutches the sides of the gas pipe with its claws, and the magnet behind is drawn toward the amature about a sixteenth of an inch. When the circuit is open, the armature reaches forward ready to take a second step. Thus, at every closing of the circuit the little magnet advances one step and drags foward the insulated wire. This description will be perhaps incomprehensible to non experts, but more people know something about electricity than they formerly did; and every telegraph operator will understand how this iron bug reaches out its armature and claws and crawls around the gas pipe.

'Now, don't misunderstand this,' said Edison; 'it isn't at all likely it will ever be used to thread gas-pipes; I have made it merely for fun—just to show that I can make a first-rate bug that will crawl around all by himself. I shan't make a cockroach, for there is no necessity for any more but— By the way I may make a toy lightning bug some time. He could be made to lighten easy enough. I wonder if he could be made to fly.'

There is a story of Solomon not contained in the 'Book of Kings.' Two of his court damsels had a row as to precedence. Solomon looked kindly and said. 'Let the oldest go first,' and the two damsels embraced and went in together with entwined arms.

Ancient Chinese Coffins.

A recent number of the Celestial Empire, referring to a discovery of some ancient graves near Shanghai, gives, says Nature, an interesting account of Chinese burial in former times. A man of means purchased his coffin when he reached the age of forty. He would then have it painted three times every year with a species of varnish, mixed with pulverized porcelain—a composition which resembled a silicate paint or enamel. The process by which this varnish was made has now been lost to the Chinese. Each coating of this paint was of some thickness and when dried had a metallic firmness resembling enamel. Frequent coats of this, if the owner lived long, caused the coffin to assume the apperance of a sarcophagus, with a foot or more in thickness of this hard-stone-like shell. After death the veins and the cavities of the stomach were filled with quicksilver, for the purpose of preserving the body. A piece of jade would then be placed in each nostril and ear, and in one hand while a peice of bar silver would be placed in the other hand. The body, thus prepared was placed on a layer of mercury within the coffin; the latter was sealed and the whole then committed to its last resting-place. When some of these saarcophagi were opened after the lapse of centuries, the bodies were found in a wonderful state of preservation; but they crumbled to dust on exposure to the air. The writer well observes that the employment of mercury by the Chinese of past dynasties for the purpose of preserving bodies ought to form an interesting subject for consideration and discussion in connection with the history of embalming and mummy making.'

The Inflexible in Action.

The foremost ship in the British navy was present. It was posted in the angle formed by the obtruding city and the coast. Thus it lay under a concentrated fire, which it seemed to despise. They call it the Inflexible, and as it is the most powerful fighting ship built by the British a brief description may not be amiss. Imagine a floating castle 110 feet long and 75 feet wide, rising 10 feet out of water, and having above that two round turrets planted diagonally at its opposite corners. Imagine this castle and its turrets heavily plated with armor, each turret having two 80-ton guns. Conceive these guns capable of firing, all four together, at an enemy ahead, astern or on either beam, and in pairs toward every point of the compass. Attached to this rectangular armored castle, but completely submerged, every part being six or seven feet under water, there is a hull of ordinary form with a powerful ram bow, with twin screws and a submerged rudder and helm. It is all incased in a wooden structure that gives it seaworthiness, speed and shapeliness. The armor is two feet thick. Each gun throws a projectile weighing 1,760 pounds. Each turret, weighing 750 tons, is turned by hydraulic machinery—the horse power is 8,000. When a gun is fired the muzzle is turned over and down into the deck below, where it is loaded with ease; then it is raised up until in proper position for aiming. The cost of this monster approximates $3,250,000.

NEWS AND GOSSIP.

If you feel an ill-will toward any person, go and do him a favor, and your ill feeling will vanish at once.

Red, used on a railway, signifies danger, and says 'stop.' It is the same thing displayed on a man's nose.

That only can with propriety be styled refinement which, by strengthening the intellect, purifies the manners.

'What is the use of trying to lie about it so clumsily?' says the magistrate benevolently; 'haven't you a lawyer?'

We appreciate no pleasure unless we are occasionally deprived of them. Restraint is the golden rule of enjoyment

Whenever we drink too deeply of pleasure, we find a sediment at the bottom of the cup, which embitters the draught we have quaffed with so much avidity.

Waiter to member of Legislature—'Will you have some desert?' Member to waiter—'No, thank you; I'll take a piece of pie.—*Cincinnati Enquirer.*

Break, break, break,
On the cold gray stones, O sea!
But the cash I've spent on rock and rye
Will never come back to me.

What is the difference between a honeycomb and a honeymoon? A honeycomb consists in a number of small cells, while a honeymoon is one great sell.

The most favorable thing about our State nominations and the coming campaign, is that no one has written any poetry about them. A few poems would throw a damper over the whole affair.

The New York *World* happily observes that 'the Independent strength in the South can be accurately measured by the number of Federal offices to be filled and the amount of scrub-women's money to be spent.'

A youngster asked his mother for bread and jam, and she, wishing to break him of the habit, replied, 'When I was your age I couldn't get anything to eat between meals.' 'But you did not have a nice good ma like me, did you?' That settled it—he won.

Piety is not for Sundays only but for all days; spirituality of mind is not appropriate to one set of actions and an impertinence and intrusion with reference to others, but, like the act of breathing, like the circulation of the blood, like the silent growth of the stature, a process that may be going on stimultaneously with all our actions,—when we are busiest as when we are idlest; in the church, in the world; in solitude, in society; in our grief and in our gladness; in our toil and in our rest; sleeping; by day, by night,—amid all the engagements and exigencies of life.—*Rev. John Caird.*